



Riverlovers Currents

Volume 28, Number 12, December 2015

Message from the President

I want to express our sympathies to the good people of France. May there be healing. All life is precious.

We did two hikes in early November to Anthony's Nose overlooking the Bear Mountain Bridge. We carpooled up the one lane South Mountain Bypass road to the small parking area for the Appalachian Trail. Strenuous trails, but well worth the view. When we arrived, you pick your place to sit on the mountain to take it all in. It is an amazing place to be with the other hikers enjoying the view.

After one of the hikes, I rode my bicycle across the Bear Mountain Bridge. It was interesting to see the bridge up close and the fantastic view from the bridge. The walkway is very narrow, and there is very little clearance with the handle-bars. I had to stop to let the walkers pass by.

The next week we explored Whippoorwill Park. The trails could be marked better and we missed several turn-offs. We got as far as the broken dam. This was my first time there, but it's a very nice park.

We will do our last walk of the year on Sunday, November 22nd at 1pm. We will explore Warburg Park, described in the book, *Walkable Westchester*, as easy on the feet. For directions: Northbound on the Taconic State Parkway, take the Pinesbridge Road exit, and turn right. The park is to the right just past a few houses. For Southbound Taconic Parkway, exit at Rte. 133, turn right and go under the parkway, then turn left and go north to Pinesbridge Road.

For the October meeting we screened "A Crude Awakening—The Oil Crash." The movie showed how boom-towns in the U.S. were practically abandoned once the oil ran out. Another point: Once a new oil field is discovered, the oil is pumped out as fast as possible, instead of being rationed for the future.

For the November 20th Potluck and meeting, we screened "Pandora's Promise—At the Bottom of the Box She Found Hope." This film was an audience favorite at the Sundance Film Festival. To quote from Gwyneth Craven's book, "Power to Save the World—The Truth about Nuclear Energy": "The DOE projects electrical demand will grow by half by 2025. Even with increased conservation of energy, the need for base load will still be met by either fossil fuel or nuclear power. Some estimates indicate that a plant of standard streamlined design, with many more built-in passive features, could be built in five years, as is already the case in France."

For the December 18th Potluck, I will give a talk about air and its components. How do we affect the atmosphere? Hint to last month's question, air is compressible.

For the winter Potlucks we will be screening such documentaries as "Burning the Future—Coal in America." From the DVD jacket: "Coal provides half of America's electricity, but at what cost?—36% of U.S. global warming emissions from our coal-burning plants." We will also be screening several "Ted Talks" about the pro's and con's of nuclear energy. These talks are only 18 minutes long.

As a reminder, the ever-popular Teatown EagleFest is Saturday, February 6, 2016. We will need volunteers to serve soups at the Nature Center, and volunteers to promote Riverlovers at the Outreach table in the big tent. So, let me wish everyone a Merry Holiday season.

Come on out to our meetings, and participate in our activities. Members and non-members are welcome. Together we can educate ourselves and others to protect the Hudson River, and save the Earth and its climate for ourselves and future generations to enjoy.

Exxon And The Big Lie

Years before climate change became a political issue, Exxon knew about the science. Exxon knew about the global temperature increases. Exxon knew about carbon dioxide's role. Exxon knew about the catastrophic possibilities.

What the oil company chose to do then changed the course of history. Recent reporting has shown that Exxon's scientists warned the company about climate change back in the 1970s. But instead of supporting policies to combat climate disruption, Exxon embarked on a decades-long campaign to question the certainty of climate science, they sought to exploit and drill into melting Arctic oil fields, and they funded think tanks and politicians who opposed action.

These decisions weren't just immoral, they may have been illegal under the RICO Act. We need to get the government to investigate Exxon for misleading the public on climate change to boost its profits. If Exxon intentionally misled the public, then they should be held accountable. That was a crime with enormous consequences for all of us.

Pay your dues now—support our river!
\$25 Individual & \$35 Family

It cost \$9.30 a year to send you the *Riverlovers Currents*. Can you add at least that much to your annual dues?

Reining In Coal

Coal-fired power plants are responsible for close to 40% of U.S. electricity-generated greenhouse gas emissions. EPA's proposal for existing power plants will cut those emissions by 30% by 2030, and reduce particle pollution, nitrous oxides and sulfur oxides by more than 25%.

But the business community (or at least some big segments of it) is disseminating mis-information about the new rules. They claim that transitioning to clean energy will raise prices for consumers and hurt the economy. With the numerous options made available to states to implement the new rule, and the decreasing cost for renewables, states can adopt the best mix of solutions for consumers and allow the utilities to provide energy efficiency and renewable energy investments that will both satisfy the emissions reduction targets and, in many cases, result in lower utility bills. In addition, based on our experience with the Clean Air Act over the last 44 years, the economy won't suffer when we cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Contrary to the ads, a "war on coal" is not being waged. The Congressional Research Service notes that market conditions, not EPA rules explain coal's decline as a fuel for power. Coal has been eclipsed by superior technologies, but rather than admit failure, they're trying to blame the EPA.

It is also not true that the energy industry is united in opposing the new rule. Some regulated utilities, like Dominion Resources and Duke Energy, have recognized that the proposed rule is readily achievable, and have said they expect to be able to implement climate change plans and still keep rates affordable.

As for the claim that alternatives to coal are too expensive, when the full health, environmental and carbon costs for coal are calculated, the cost of electricity generation from coal rises 170 percent. Alternatives to coal for power are cheaper and are pricing out coal. For example, Austin, Texas has signed a 20-year deal for solar power that will allow consumer rates to actually decline.

Coal is a losing proposition in many ways. It's time the industry faced up to reality and the public interest, instead of trying to hoodwink everyone that they are still relevant.

Corporate Cash Fuels Climate Doubt

For years, politicians wanting to block legislation on climate change have bolstered their arguments by pointing to the work of a handful of scientists who claim that greenhouse gases pose little risk to humanity. One of these is Wei-Hock Soon, a scientist at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, who claims that variations in the sun's energy can largely explain recent global warming.

But newly released documents show the extent to which Dr. Soon's work has been tied to funding he received from corporate interests. He has accepted more than \$1.2 million from the fossil fuel industry over the past decade, while failing to disclose that conflict of interest in most of his scientific papers. He appears to have violated ethical guidelines of the journals that published his work. The documents also show that Dr. Soon described many of his scientific papers as "deliverables" that he completed in exchange for their money, in correspondence with his corporate funders.

Historians and sociologists of science say that since the tobacco wars of the 1960s, corporations trying to block legislation employ a strategy of creating the appearance of scientific doubt, usually with the help of ostensibly independent researchers who accept industry funding.

The newly disclosed documents, plus additional documents compiled by Greenpeace, show that at least \$409,000 of Dr. Soon's funding in the past decade came from a subsidiary of Southern Company, based in Atlanta and one of the largest utility holding companies with huge investments in coal-burning power plants. The company has spent heavily over many years to lobby against greenhouse-gas regulations. Dr. Soon also received at least \$230,000 from the Charles Koch Charitable Foundation. (Mr. Koch's fortune derives in part from oil refining.)

Though often described on conservative news programs as a "Harvard astrophysicist," Dr. Soon is not an astrophysicist and has never been employed by Harvard. He is a part-time employee of the Smithsonian Institution with a doctoral degree in aerospace engineering.

He has little formal training in climatology, but has for years published papers claiming that variations in the sun's energy explains most recent global warming. His thesis is that human activity plays a minor role in climate change.

Many experts in the field say that Dr. Soon uses out-of-date data, publishes spurious correlations between solar output and climate indicators, and does not take account of the evidence implicating emissions from human behavior in climate change.

So this is how corporate money buys "doubt" about climate change and other threats to profits. In the end, it didn't work with tobacco and it won't work with the far more serious issue of climate change, but unfortunately, dirty money has succeeded in delaying the action our planet so desperately needs.

Federal Hudson River Natural Resource Trustees Statement

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration have issued a response to the EPA's statement on the PCB dredging demobilization approval plan:

"The Hudson River valley is a unique and nationally significant ecological, cultural and economic resource. Under Federal Superfund law, GE is responsible for both the remediation—clean-up—of the PCB contamination, and the restoration of injured natural resources through the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration process. Now is the time for GE to thoroughly address their PCB contamination of the Hudson River.

"Although the dredging has removed some of the contamination, it has not addressed nor compensated the public for injuries to natural resources. Trustees have determined that GE's PCBs have injured groundwater, fish, waterfowl, surface water, and navigational services of the Hudson River for decades, and these injuries will continue well into the future. On behalf of the American people, including all New Yorkers, the Trustees will continue to vigorously pursue measures to ensure GE meets its obligations and to recover damages to restore the natural resources of the Hudson River."



What's Happening When

Sundays, 10am–3pm, **Farmers' Market** at the Beacon Sloop Club, at Long Dock Park in Beacon. Local cheeses, eggs, pasta, bread, lamb, fruits and vegetables.

Nov 22, Sun, 1pm, **Riverlovers Hike**. We will explore Warburg Park, described in the book, *Walkable Westchester*, as easy on the feet. See page 1 for details & meeting place.

Dec 7, Mon, First day of Hanukkah.

Dec 12, Sat, 7:30pm, **Walkabout Clearwater Coffeehouse featuring "Pete Seeger Remembered."** A special evening devoted to the music of, and stories about our founder, **Pete Seeger** featuring **Bill and Livia Vanaver, Kristen Graves, Hope Machine, Aurora Barnes, Rick and Donna Nestler, David Bernz, and Jacob Bernz**. The program is being crafted by Pete's longtime friend and collaborator, David Bernz. At Memorial United Methodist Church, 250 Bryant Ave, White Plains. Advance tickets www.BrownPaperTickets.com/producer/5602 via credit card (\$18), or \$23 at door. Open seating. Proceeds benefit Walkabout & Clearwater. Refreshments available. Free Parking. Sing with the Walkabout Clearwater Chorus at its informal Teachabout starting at 6:45pm. Info: 914-946-1625 or www.WalkaboutClearwater.org.

Dec 18, Fri, 6:30pm, **Riverlovers Holiday Potluck** at Croton Point Nature Center. "Air," a presentation by Warren on how fragile our atmosphere is. Plus a celebration of Riverlovers' year, and charting our upcoming one. Info: www.Riverlovers.org.

Dec 25, Fri, Enjoy Christmas.

As a reminder, the ever-popular **Teatown EagleFest** is Saturday, February 6, 2016. We will need volunteers to serve soups at the Nature Center, and volunteers to promote Riverlovers at the Outreach table in the big tent.

Can We Love Nuclear Waste?

We used to have a "waste confidence" Nuclear Regulatory Commission policy saying the nation can be confident that radioactive waste generated by nuclear reactors will be managed safely no matter how much we generate. Legal action by New York's Eric Schneiderman and other attorneys general led to a court rejection of the Waste Confidence rule. The court found that the NRC has not adequately considered the environmental impacts of the additional waste that new and relicensed reactors would generate.

The NRC, in trying to formulate a new rule, has some really big problems. Dangers of leaks and fires involving highly radioactive spent fuel can be even greater than a meltdown of the nuclear reactor that produced the spent fuel.

These dangers continue long after the reactor is shut down. Issues like maintaining the long-term stability of the waste, security vulnerability, storage system deterioration, and accidents are long-standing and have yet to be resolved. There are currently over 2700 tons of high-level radioactive

waste being stored at Entergy's Indian Point facility, and the plutonium content will remain deadly for a quarter of a million years or more.

Spent fuel radioactivity will continue to pose a threat to life for the next million years, and we don't have a viable solution. Does it make any sense to continue making more waste, while we don't have a clue after more than fifty years of effort? What was the definition of insanity again?

Here's how to join Riverlovers...

(the local Clearwater Sloop Club in the Northern Westchester-Putnam County area)

Application for Riverlovers Membership

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Telephone _____

Renewal ___ New ___ Additional Contribution \$ _____

Please send check (\$25 individual, \$35 family) for 2016 to:
Riverlovers, P.O. Box 285, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520.

I want to have *Riverlovers Currents* delivered electronically.

Send to this e-mail _____

Yes! I Also Want To Join Clearwater

Please sign me up in the following membership category:

<input type="radio"/> Individual	\$40	<input type="radio"/> Mariner	\$500
<input type="radio"/> Family	\$55	<input type="radio"/> Sailing-Master	\$1000
<input type="radio"/> Contributor	\$100	<input type="radio"/> Benefactor	\$5000
<input type="radio"/> Sponsor	\$200	<input type="radio"/> Student	\$10

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please include check payable to Clearwater, or charge by credit card

Visa MC Discover Amex

Account No. _____

Exp. Date _____ Signature _____

Mail To: Clearwater, Inc.
724 Wolcott Avenue
Beacon, NY 12508

Your Clearwater membership gets you the *Navigator* and other benefits, along with being part of Riverlovers' "parent" organization representing individuals and Sloop Clubs up and down the Hudson Valley "working for the River."

Riverlovers - Who We Are

Riverlovers, Inc. is a chartered Sloop Club of the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc., an environmental non-profit membership organization whose most visible symbol is its member-owned and operated 106-ft. sloop "Clearwater." As a local affiliate, River-lovers' purposes are:

- Maintaining an active Sloop Club in the Northern Westchester-Putnam County area;
- Meeting the needs and interests of individuals through a variety of interest groups, including monthly Potluck dinner meetings with varied programs, environmental education and awareness, boats and sailing, concerts and festivals;
- Organizing trips and recreational activities, seminars and workshops, learn-to-sail programs and Clearwater visits;
- Research, education and action to protect our rivers and our environment;
- Working for access and effective land use along the Hudson River and its tributaries;
- Boating projects on the Hudson River, to reach out to the surrounding community for educational and recreational purposes.

We invite you to join us. Contact our interest group coordinators, or write to Riverlovers, Inc., P.O. Box 285, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520. Together we can do a lot!



Interest Group Coordinators

Interest Group	Coordinator	Phone
Envir. Education	Bill Flank	238-8240
Membership	Gunnar Andersen	432-3112
Newsletter	Bill Flank	238-8240
Newsletter Distribution	Cynthia Andersen	432-3112
Outreach		
Photographer/Archivist	Beverly Dyckman	739-5057
Potluck	Warren Lindholm	739-9028
Publicity		

Web Page: www.riverlovers.org

Riverlovers Officers

President:	Warren Lindholm	739-9028
Vice Pres. (programs):	Robin Fox	271-6088
Secretary:	Cynthia Andersen	432-3112
Treasurer:	Daria Gregg	944-8396
President-Emeriti	Eric Marshall	827-3696
	Gunnar Andersen	432-3112

Newsletter Submissions

Please send news articles and other items of interest to Riverlovers Currents, P.O. Box 285, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520. Include your name, address, and phone number. Names can be omitted on request.

Back issues of *Riverlovers Currents* are available at our web site, www.riverlovers.org

Newsletter Committee: Editor, Bill Flank; Associate Editor, Mel Fitting

December Newsletter Contributors: Bill Flank, Warren Lindholm

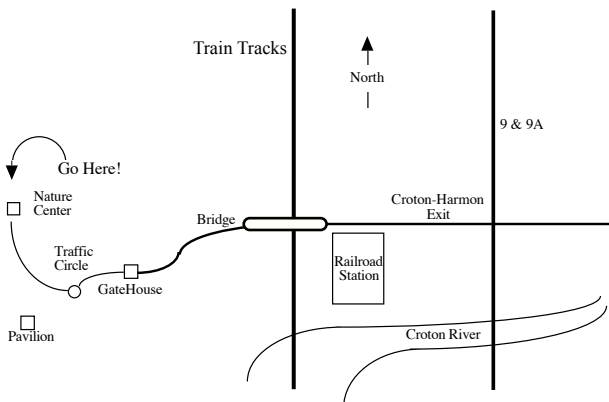
Riverlovers Holiday Potluck and Warren's talk on "Air"



Riverlovers, Inc.

P.O. Box 285

Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520



Friday, December 18, 2015

6:30pm

Croton Point Nature Center